

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/082 W

-----014224 301704Z /46

O 301600Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7372
USMISSION USUN NEW YORKIMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 1083

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF
SUBJ: NAMIBIA: SF PRESS ALLEGES LEAKS ON REGISTRATION OF
VOTERS: VORSTER AND BOTHA CRITICIZE MCHENRY

1. SUMMARY: SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE OVER THE LAST
SEVERAL DAYS HIGHLIGHTED REPORTS ALLEGEDLY BASED ON
WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK SOURCES THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS LIKELY
TO PROCEED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS WITH THE REGISTRATION
OF VOTERS FOR A NAMIBIAN ELECTION. THE REPORTS HAVE
ALSO REFERRED TO SUPPOSED SPLITS WITHIN THE CONTACT GROUP
AND THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION. MEANWHILE, BOTH THE
PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAVE PUBLICLY CRITICIZED
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AMB MCHENRY. END SUMMARY

2. THE SUNDAY TIMES AND SUNDAY EXPRESS OF MAY 28
CARRIED FRONT PAGE REPORTS THAT SOUTH AFRICA WILL
PROCEED WITHIN TWO WEEKS TO TAKE THE "FIRST ELECTORAL
STEPS LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE." THE EXPRESS SPECIFIED
THAT THE STEP WOULD BE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS. BOTH

PAPERS QUOTED "WASHINGTON SOURCES" AS THE BASIS OF THEIR REPORTS. FLEUR DE VILLIERS, WRITING IN THE SUNDAY TIMES, NOTED THAT "IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S DECISION TO TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD AN ELECTION IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA NEED NOT NECESSARILY PREJUDICE THE WEST'S PLAN." DE VILLIER'S WASHINGTON SOURCES ALSO REPORTED "A WIDENING GULF BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF...CYRUS VANCE AND...DON MCHENRY." SHE ADDED THAT "REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FIVE IN CAPE TOWN STRONGLY DISASSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM MCHENRY'S VIEWS AND WERE OPENLY CRITICAL OF HIS STORMY VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH HAS INFURIATED THE GOVERNMENT." CERTAIN OF THE FIVE, SHE REPORTED, "TOLD MR VORSTER THAT MR MCHENRY'S VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA WAS A PERSONAL MISSION AND THAT HE HAD NOT CAME AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE."

3. DIE BURGER, THE CAPE TIMES, AND THE CITIZEN CARRIED ARTICLES ON MAY 29 AND 30 REITERATING THE MAIN THEMES OF THE SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS. ALL QUOTED WASHINGTON OR NEW YORK SOURCES AS STATING THAT THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS WAS EXPECTED TO BEGIN WITHIN TWO WEEKS. THE CAPE TIMES NOTED THAT THE WEST WOULD NOT REGARD SUCH A STEP AS HELPFUL, AND WANTED SOUTH AFRICA TO MAKE A POSITIVE MOVE. ON THE MCHENRY VISIT, THE CAPE TIMES "EMPHASIZED... THAT MCHENRY WAS NOT SPEAKING FOR THE OTHER WESTERN MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE CITIZEN CARRIED UNCLASSIFIED

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A SIMILAR STORY THE SAME DAY, WHICH STATED THAT THE GOVT MUST START TO ACT SOON IF SOUTH WEST AFRICA IS TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IT ADDED THAT "NO REASONABLE PERSON CAN REGARD SUCH AN ACT (REGISTRATION OF VOTERS) AS ANYTHING BUT AN ADMINISTRATIVE STEP." COMMENTING ON THE SUNDAY NEWSPAPER STORIES, THE CITIZEN SAID THESE WERE APPARENTLY LEAKED BY THE WEST TO THE TWO ANTI-GOVT NEWSPAPERS IN THE HOPE OF STIRRING UP AN INTERNATIONAL OUTBURST AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. DIE BURGER ALSO CONCENTRATED UPON THIS LAST ASPECT, WRITING IN A LEAD STORY THAT LEAKS IN WASHINGTON WERE BEING USED IN AN APPARENT CAMPAIGN TO CAST SUSPICION ON SOUTH AFRICA. IT ADDED THAT RUMORS THAT SOUTH AFRICA WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN REGISTRATION OF VOTERS WERE BEING USED TO CREATE THE FALSE IMPRESSION THAT SOUTH AFRICA WANTED TO IGNORE THE WESTERN PLAN AND PROCEED UNILATERALLY.

4. ACCORDING TO MAY 29 PRESS REPORTS, PRIME MINISTER VORSTER TOLD A NATIONAL PARTY RALLY IN THE EASTERN CAPE HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE BLAME SHOULD THE WESTERN SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS COLLAPSE. VORSTER WAS REPORTEDLY

"HIGHLY CRITICAL" OF STATEMENTS MADE IN CAPE TOWN BY
AMB MCHENRY, CALLING THEM "A TRANSPARENT ATTEMPT
TO PUT THE BLAME ON SOUTH AFRICA". HE REPORTEDLY
ADDED: "IT IS NOW VERY CLEAR TO ME THAT THE FOUNDATION
IS BEING LAID FOR A RECRIMINATION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA
THAT WE ARE TO BLAME BECAUSE SWAPO HAS NOT YET GIVEN
AN ANSWER."

5. THE CITIZEN, MEANWHILE, QUOTED PIK BOTHA AS SAYING
ON MAY 28 THAT HE WAS TIRED OF AMBASSADOR MCHENRY'S
CONTINUOUS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA." ALTHOUGH
BOTHA DID NOT KNOW "WHAT GAME MR. MCHENRY IS PLAYING,"
IT APPEARED THAT MCHENRY "WAS TRYING TO PROVOKE SOUTH
AFRICA BY ALMOST FLYING SWAPO'S COLORS IN THE COUNTRY."
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BOTHA REPORTEDLY ADDED: "IT IS DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THAT
THE FIVE WESTERN COUNTRIES COULD ACCEPT THIS ATTITUDE."
THE CAPE TIMES QUOTED BOTHA AS SAYING "MR. MCHENRY
SHOULD ADHERE TO THE WESTERN SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS ON
THE TERRITORY RATHER THAN HOLD SOUTH AFRICA RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE SO-CALLED "SPIRALLING VIOLENCE."
EDMONDSON

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